

Annex 1 – Public Outreach
(Formerly contained within the Planning Section)

Public Outreach

As part of the process to update the SHMP, the EMD Mitigation and Recovery Section staff conducted a two-step process to reach out to organizations outside of state government with an interest in hazard mitigation.

First, the section conducted four workshops around the state in October 2006 to solicit comment and input from a variety of hazard mitigation stakeholders. These four workshops were conducted in October 2006 in Ellensburg (Oct. 10); Spokane (Oct. 11); Olympia (Oct. 13); and Mount Vernon (Oct. 24). Second, the section sent out questionnaires seeking comment from those invited to the workshops, but unable to attend.

The section sent email to about 800 individuals inviting them to participate in these workshops. Those invited represented a cross-section of organizations with an interest in hazard mitigation, including the following:

- Local emergency managers
- Indian tribes
- Local land use planners
- Local transportation departments
- Local public works departments
- Local schools
- Architects and engineers
- American Red Cross
- Business continuity planners
- Hazard experts from state and federal agencies
- State transportation officials, including those from state ferry system
- State four-year colleges and universities

In the four workshops, 26 individuals attended from the following organizations:

- Benton County Emergency Management
- Kittitas County Emergency Management / Sheriff's Office
- Washington State University
- Grant County Emergency Management
- City of Renton Fire Department / Emergency Management
- City of Centralia
- Alkai Consultants, Silverdale (environmental and geo-technical consultants)
- Clark (County) Regional Emergency Services Agency
- Washington Emergency Management Division
- FEMA Region 10
- Seattle Chapter of the American Red Cross
- Thurston County Emergency Management
- City of Bellevue Fire Department / Emergency Preparedness

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- City of Seattle Emergency Management
- Starbucks Coffee Company, Seattle
- FM Global Insurance, Bellevue
- Island County Emergency Management
- City of Everett Fire Department / Emergency Management
- San Juan County Emergency Management
- Whatcom County Sheriff / Emergency Management
- Emergency Services Coordinating Agency (NW King / SW Snohomish Counties)

Staff from the following organizations submitted completed questionnaires via email:

- Port of Anacortes
- Aspect Consulting, Bainbridge Island and Seattle (water, environmental and geo-technical consultants)
- The Boeing Company, International Security and Disaster Preparedness Unit, Seattle
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Columbia Geotechnical, Vancouver (geologic consulting)
- Port of Everett
- Ferry County Counseling Services
- Gallagher Risk Management Services, Bellevue (insurance company)
- Good Samaritan Hospital, Puyallup
- Hoh Indian Tribe
- King County Emergency Management, on behalf of the 37 jurisdictions that are part of the county's multi-jurisdiction hazard mitigation plan
- Klickitat County Emergency Management
- PACCAR Inc., Renton (heavy truck manufacturer)
- Pacific County Emergency Management
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Richland
- Pickets Engineering, Kirkland
- Pierce County Emergency Management
- Port of Port Angeles
- Shannon & Wilson Inc., Seattle (geo-technical and environmental consultants)
- Snohomish County Risk Management / Emergency Management
- Spokane Chapter of the American Red Cross
- Spokane Indian Tribe
- City of Vancouver
- Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle

An agenda for the workshops, questionnaires and follow-up questions appear on pages 16-19 of this chapter. The questionnaires and follow-up questions were used to solicit input from and to start a discussion with those who attended the workshops or responded via email. The questionnaires were based on a survey on natural hazards, preparedness and mitigation taken in the State of Oregon several years ago. Follow-up questions asked of both workshop participants and email respondents solicited further discussion and comment.

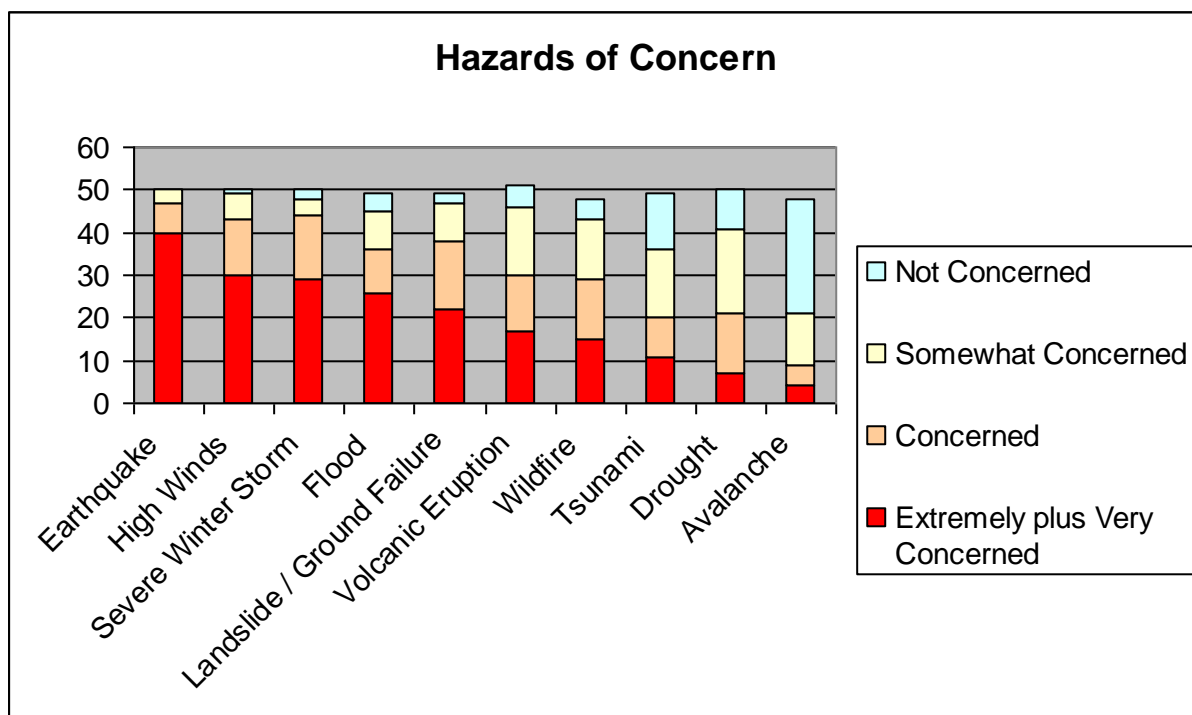
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Outreach Findings

The following sections provide a synopsis of outreach findings in two important areas – hazards of concern and mitigation strategies / priorities.

Hazards of Concern

To provide a clearer picture of the level of concern for each natural hazard, responses from the extremely concerned and very concerned categories were combined (see graph below).



Hazards in order of concern, starting with the hazard of greatest concern:

1. Earthquake
2. High Winds
3. Winter Storm
4. Flood
5. Landslide / Ground Failures
6. Volcanic Eruption
7. Wildfire
8. Tsunami
9. Drought
10. Avalanche

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It generally appears that those hazards that occur most frequently are of the greatest concern to outreach participants. Exceptions:

1. Earthquakes, which occur less frequently but result in significant damaging events about once every 30 years in Western Washington. The potential for much larger events (i.e., Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake or Seattle Fault event) that would have a major impact on more of the state is considerable but they occur much less frequently.
2. Wildland fire, which occurs much more frequently and burns far more acreage in Eastern Washington; it appears the level of concern in this hazard is lower because the bulk of the workshop participants and email respondents were from Western Washington, while the bulk of the wildfires in recent years have been in Eastern Washington.
3. Volcanic Eruption, which occur much less frequently than most hazard events, but resulting lahars that could be very destructive to a significant number of urban areas and their infrastructure in river valleys below the state's five volcanoes.

This order of concern is similar to one developed by SHMAT for the *2004 Washington State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan*; the team suggested a focus on those hazards which produce the greatest impacts and occur at least once every generation (20-30 years). These hazards are – in no order of priority – earthquake, flood, severe storm (high winds and winter storm), and wildland fire.

Mitigation Strategies / Priorities

Outreach participants expressed concern over building in hazard areas but expressed mixed opinions on how best to deal with the issue. There was more support for incentives that would foster mitigation than for providing direct government funding to property owners for them to avoid building in hazard zones.

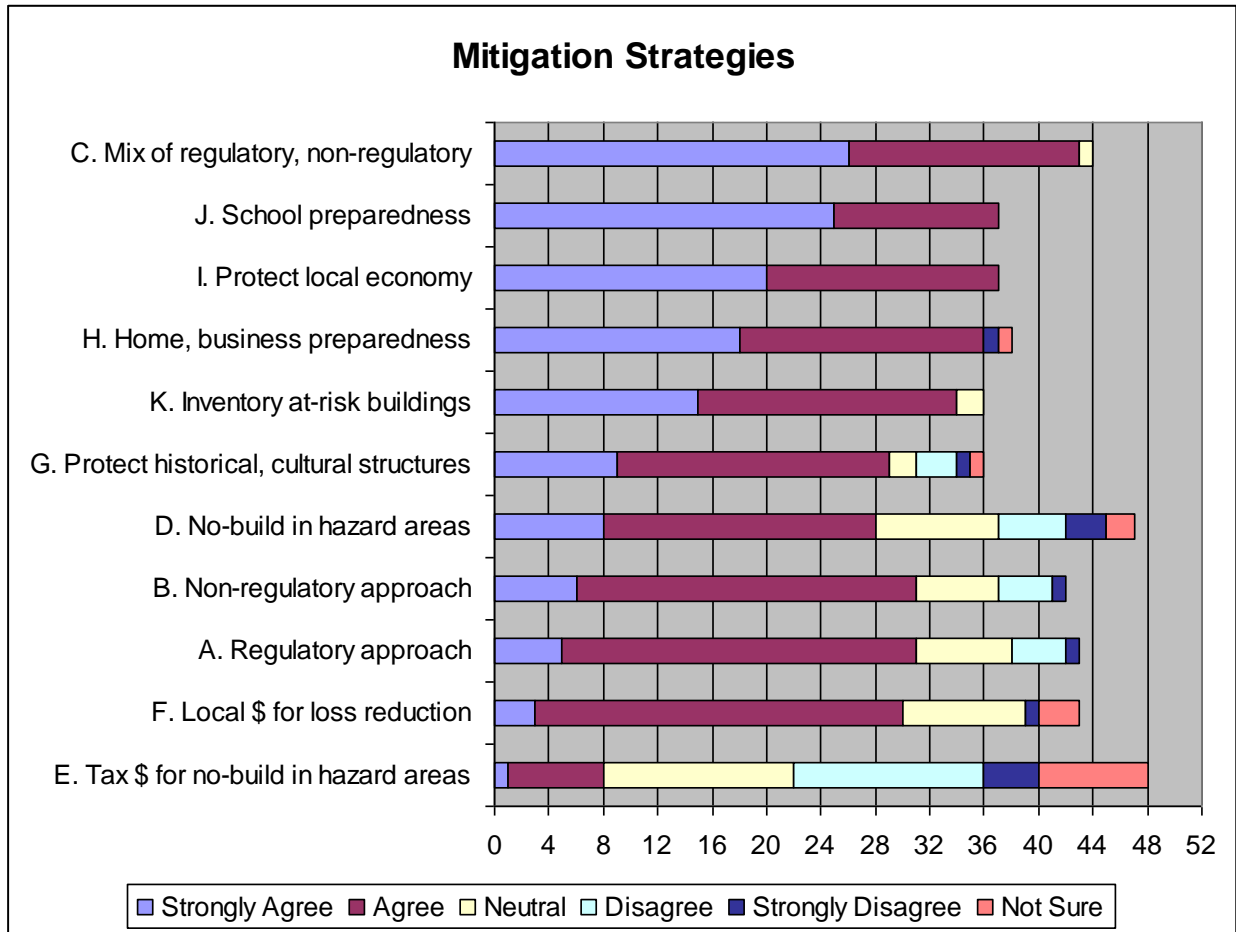
Outreach participants “strongly agreed” with three mitigation strategies proposed in the questionnaire (see below). The “strongly agreed” strategies and the rationale for their support are as follows:

- Strategy J – School preparedness: Schools need to be safe, and schools are seen as a natural place to begin public education efforts because kids take home the preparedness message.
- Strategy C – Mix of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches: Regulatory approaches have limited impact.
- Strategy I – Protect local economy: The faster the local economy recovers following a hazard event, the quicker all aspects of the community recover.

Two other strategies received strong support from nearly half of the workshop participants:

- Willingness to make home or business more disaster resilient (Strategy H).
- Preparing an inventory of at-risk buildings (Strategy K).

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The following are themes that developed during the discussions on mitigation strategies and priorities; they are not in any particular order:

- Public education – increase it:
 - Many comments noted that additional public education is necessary to increase awareness of impact of hazards on individuals, families, businesses, etc., because the public does not recognize the impact hazards have on them personally. Suggestions include:
 - Focusing on personal preparedness both at home and away from home
 - Learning why people do not mitigate and change the mitigation message to address
 - Presenting simple / do-able mitigation actions to home and business owners
 - Changing the perception that “it (the big disaster) won’t happen here”
 - Providing continuity of operations training / information to business

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- Providing hazard science information in a way that people will better understand the threat and their vulnerability and that drives them to prepare / mitigate
 - Targeting vulnerable populations
- Several participants agreed that public officials need better education on hazards and mitigation. Comments included:
 - Public officials “don’t get it” (the value of mitigation)
 - Public officials need to understand the benefit of hazard reduction efforts for their communities
 - Public officials need to be directed to funds for mitigation actions.
- Participants noted that property owners’ awareness of the hazards that may be on their property (e.g., the frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas which local critical area regulations are required to identify and regulate) needs to increase, and that those who build on hazard areas should not expect public assistance if their buildings are damaged by a hazard event. There currently exist no consequences for people who build in hazard areas, according to other comments. Property owners also need to know that building codes are for life safety (allowing people to get out of damaged buildings) not for protecting the economic investment in the building itself.
- Another suggestion is for the state to develop templates for public education and media messaging which local communities can use / implement.
- Helping communities: Several workshop participants said communities need help developing hazard mitigation plans and with mitigation actions and initiatives they cannot do themselves.
 - Planning help: Washington EMD has provided mitigation grant funds, computer software, and one-on-one technical assistance in the past, and continues technical assistance on an ongoing basis. One participant suggested a “circuit rider” approach used by other state agencies to reach out and help communities. One way might be for state staff to spend a concentrated period with communities to help them assemble information for their plan and help them write it.
 - Initiative help: While the workshop facilitators did not explore this explicitly, this can mean assistance in developing and writing mitigation grant funding applications
- Mitigation incentives: Several respondents suggested the state establish a set of economic incentives to encourage the implementation of mitigation measures. Such incentives mentioned included potential tax breaks, lower-cost insurance and cheaper building permits. Such initiatives exist elsewhere in the country.

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- No public funds for private buildings: Several participants commented that government should not be spending public funds on private buildings and for repairing buildings in hazard zones that are damaged by hazard events.
- Better information and maps on hazards and assessment of risks so the public and others better understand their vulnerability. This will help move the public to implement preparedness and hazard reduction strategies, and help local planners and developers make better decisions about building in hazard areas.
- Using limited funds:
 - Focus on developing mitigation strategies or priorities that are multi-hazard in their approach
 - Focus on non-structural mitigation measures and those that are inexpensive to implement
 - Make the State EMD a clearinghouse for scientific hazard information that is understandable to the public and that will move them to implement hazard reduction strategies
 - Mitigate schools, transportation and public services (e.g., water, sewer) infrastructure
 - Public education
 - Remove structures from hazard areas
- Mitigation priorities, in no particular order (*and how they are addressed in 2007 SHMP Mitigation Strategy initiatives matrix*):
 - Focus strategies on life safety vs. specific hazards (*implicitly built into Mitigation Strategy initiatives matrix*)
 - Focus on strategies that are multi-hazard in their approach (*implicitly built-in to Mitigation Strategy initiatives matrix*)
 - Help communities that lack resources with mitigation planning and initiatives (*addressed in Strategy 3.1*)
 - Develop incentives (see discussions above) and best practice examples i.e., Firewise) to encourage local mitigation (*addressed in Strategy 3.1*)
 - Public education (*addressed in Strategy 5.3*)
 - Mitigate schools, transportation and public services (e.g., water, sewer) infrastructure (*addressed and implicitly built into Strategy 2.3*)
 - Reduce the number of structures in hazard areas (*addressed in Strategy 2.3*)
 - Develop better / more understandable information on hazards (*addressed in Strategy 5.1, 5.2, 5.3*)

Hazard Mitigation Plan Workshop Agenda

October 10, 2006 – Ellensburg
October 11, 2006 – Spokane
October 13, 2006 – Olympia
October 24, 2006 – Mount Vernon
9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Welcome / Why We Are Here

What is Hazard Mitigation? Why plan?

What are the State's Natural Hazards of Concern?

Hazard Mitigation Strategies

Where Do We Go From Here?

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EMD website: <http://emd.wa.gov>

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Questionnaire #1 – Natural Hazards

Name of your organization:

How concerned are you about the following natural disasters affecting your community?
(Place an X in the corresponding column for each hazard)

Natural Disasters	Extremely Concerned	Very Concerned	Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Concerned
Avalanche					
Drought					
Earthquake					
Flood					
High Winds					
Landslide / Ground Failure					
Severe Winter Storm					
Tsunami					
Volcanic Eruption					
Wildfire					
Other:					
Other:					

Rationale for adding hazards above:

Why are you concerned or not concerned about particular hazard(s)? Please explain.

Other comments you would like to make:

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Questionnaire #2 – Mitigation Strategies

A number of activities can reduce your community / organization risk from natural hazards. These activities can be both regulatory and non-regulatory. An example of a regulatory activity is a policy that limits or prohibits development in a known hazard area such as a floodplain. An example of a non-regulatory activity would be to develop a public education program to demonstrate steps citizens can take to make their homes safer from natural hazards.

Place an X in the column that best represents your opinion of each of the following strategies to reduce the risk and loss associated with natural disasters.

Community-wide Strategies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
A. I support a regulatory approach to reducing risk.						
B. I support a non-regulatory approach to reducing risk.						
C. I support a mix of both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to reducing risk.						
D. I support policies to prohibit development in areas subject to natural hazards.						
E. I support the use of tax dollars (federal, state and/or local) to compensate landowners for not developing in areas subject to natural hazards.						
F. I support the use of local tax dollars to reduce risks and losses from natural disasters.						
G. I support protecting historical and cultural structures.						
H. I would be willing to make my home or business more disaster resistant.						
I. I support steps to safeguard the local economy following a disaster event.						
J. I support improving the disaster preparedness of local schools.						
K. I support a local inventory of at-risk buildings and infrastructure.						

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If you *Strongly Agree* with any of the strategies listed above, please explain why. Provide an explanation for each.

If you *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with any of the strategies listed above, please explain why. Provide an explanation for each.

How should limited mitigation funding be used? On specific hazards (if so, please identify the hazard(s))? On specific strategies (if so, please identify the strategies)? In any other ways (please explain)?

Which mitigation strategies would you like to see implemented in your community or by your organization (please identify and explain why)?

Which mitigation strategies seems to work in your community or for your organization (please identify and explain why)?

Which mitigation strategies do not seem to work in your community or for your organization (please explain)?

Which groups should the state work with to reduce hazard losses (please identify)?

What should the state's mitigation priorities be?

For the state as a whole (please explain)?

For the local level (please explain)?

Anything else you would like the state to consider vis-à-vis hazard mitigation?